

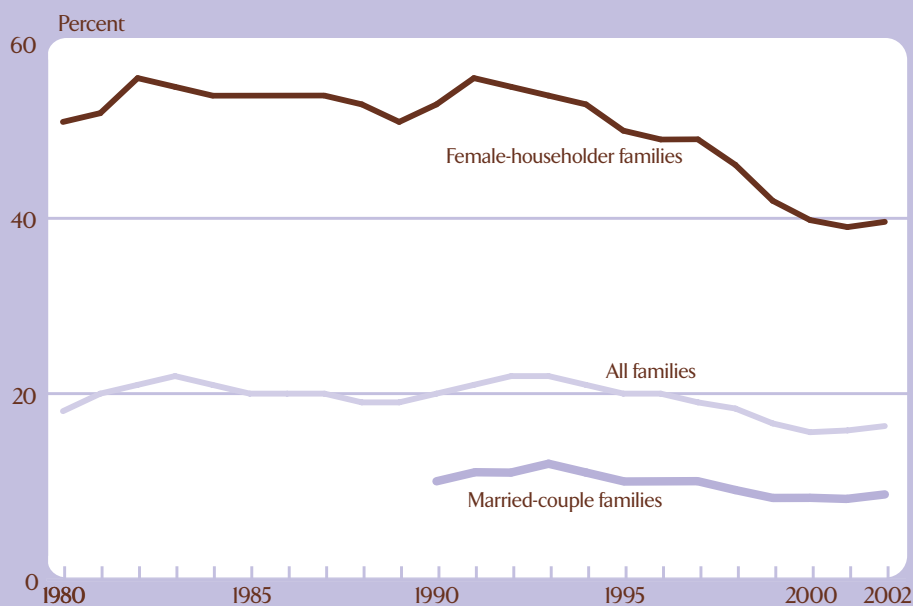
## Economic security indicators

Economic indicators, such as poverty status, stable parental employment, and food security, offer some insight into the material well-being of children, and the extent to which they may have difficulty growing up and achieving their life goals because they lack economic resources.

The number of children living in families with income below their poverty threshold<sup>4</sup> rose from 11.2 million in 2001 to 11.6 million in 2002. The poverty rate rose for these “related children” (children who were related to their householder), from 15.8 percent in 2001 to 16.3 percent in 2002 (Figure 3).<sup>5</sup> Although this was the first statistically significant annual increase in the poverty rate for related children since 1991, this increase followed a period of decline from a recent peak of 22 percent in 1993. The drop in poverty from 1996 to the recent low point in 2000 was larger than the decline from 1993 to 1996.<sup>6</sup>

FIGURE 3

Percentage of related children under age 18 in poverty by family structure, 1980-2002



NOTE: Estimates refer to children under age 18 who are related to the householder. In 2002, the average poverty threshold for a family of four was \$18,392 in annual income.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Survey, March and Annual Social Economic Supplements.

<sup>4</sup> Poverty is measured by comparing family income to one of 48 dollar amounts called thresholds. The dollar amounts vary by the size of the family and the members' ages. The average threshold for a family of three was \$14,348 in 2002; for a family of four, \$18,392. For further detail see [www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html).

<sup>5</sup> The poverty rate for all people under age 18—which includes some children who were not related to their householder, as well as householders and spouses under age 18—showed no statistical change between 2001 (16.3 percent) and 2002 (16.7 percent).

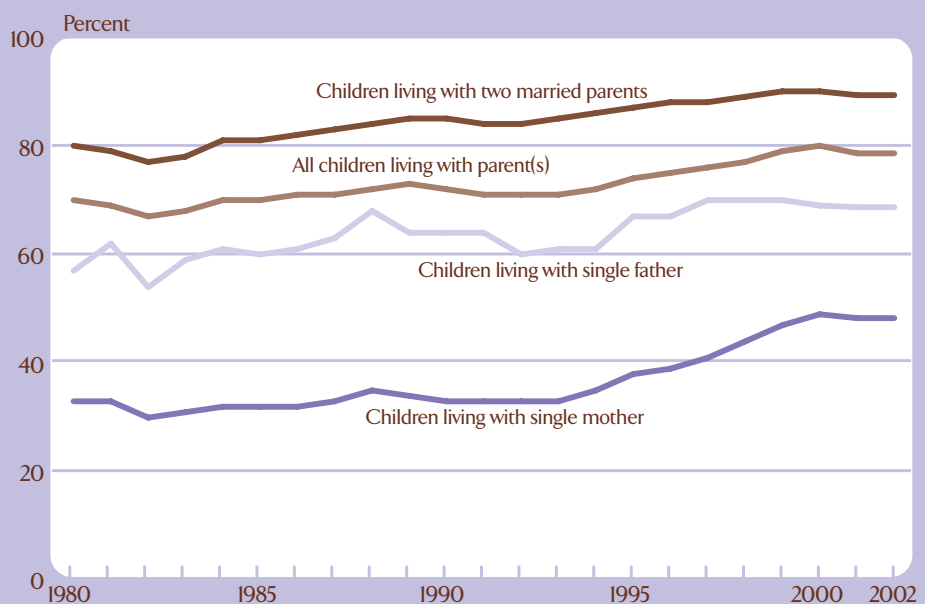
<sup>6</sup> The child poverty rates for related children in 2000 and 2001 were not statistically different.

Poverty among children varies greatly by family structure. Children living in female householder families with no husband present continued to experience a higher poverty rate in 2002 than their counterparts in married-couple families: 40 percent compared with 9 percent. Disparities also persisted by race and ethnicity. Children who were Black (and no other race) had a poverty rate of 32 percent in 2002; Hispanic children (who could be of any race) had a poverty rate of 28 percent; single-race White, non-Hispanic children had a poverty rate of 9 percent. Because racial categories were redefined in 2002, no direct historical comparisons can be made for Black children. However, the poverty rate in the first half of the 1990s was above 40 percent for Black children and above 35 percent for Hispanic children.

The percentage of children who had at least one parent working year round, full time was 78 percent in 2002, not distinguishable statistically from 2001, but below its peak of 80 percent in 2000 (Figure 4). Children living in two-parent families were more likely to have a parent working year round, full time (89 percent) compared with children living with a single mother or a single father (49 percent and 70 percent, respectively). In 2002, children living in poverty were less likely to have a parent working year round, full time than children who were not in poverty (33 percent and 87 percent, respectively).

**FIGURE 4**

Percentage of children under age 18 living with at least one parent employed year round, full time by family structure, 1980-2002



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Current Population Survey, March and Annual Social Economic Supplements.

In 2002, 18 percent of children lived in households classified as “food insecure” by the USDA. Just over half a million children (0.8 percent) lived in households further classified as “food insecure with child hunger,” statistically unchanged from 1999 and down from 1.3 percent in 1995.